

INCOMING TELEGRAM

Department of State

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TO: Secretary of State

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EYES ONLY SECRETARY AND CHIEFS OF MISSION

Because of importance of subjects discussed I am reporting last night's Kremlin reception in detail to best of my admittedly hazy recollection. Press were present and will have reported developments at dinner which noteworthy chiefly for cracks at Rockefeller and Adenauer and implication that Soviet Union is considering further reductions in troop strength because of their increased firepower due to modern atomic weapons. Dinner did not break up until shortly before 2 a.m. when as usual party moved room for dancing. I was on point of leaving when Khrushchev, who was watching dancing, sent aide to invite my wife and myself to join him. French Ambassador and his wife came up at this time to pay their respects and Khrushchev invited the four of us to come with him into next room. This was a new room furnished in modern style complete with fountain filled with colored plastic rocks. Luigi Longo Italian Communist, had been standing with Khrushchev and came into room with us. Doors had closed behind us and there was no one else present except Security Officer and (*) shortly afterwards Kozlov and Mikoyan joined us. Khrushchev invited us all to sit down at one of the numerous tables. Noticing our embarrassment at presence of Longo he asked if we could not for this one evening consider him simply as an Italian and not as a Communist. Longo, who does not speak Russian, took virtually no part in ensuing conversation. Later on after Khrushchev had toasted other foreigners present he proposed toast to Longo. I suggested he drink to Longo and we would drink to Italy. This was

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accepted in good part. As we were walking into room Khrushchev told me he had planned invite me with my family including children to his house on January 2, unfortunately his wife was ill with high fever and he could not carry out his plan but he hoped if she had recovered by week from Sunday we would come then. Khrushchev sent an aide to invite British and German Ambassadors to join us but was informed they had already gone home. He remarked that German Ambassador was probably offended by his remarks. I said I had also not liked some of his remarks but Khrushchev passed this off by saying we could still talk and understand each other. He said he was exceedingly pleased by his trip to US and that President Eisenhower had simply overwhelmed him with his personality. He added that if only President could serve another term he was sure our problems could be solved. He said he had also formed good impression of Secretary Herter but he did not like Vice President Nixon. I told him I was sure he had made wrong appraisal of Vice President who was staunch advocate of our system just as Khrushchev was firm advocate of his. I said nevertheless I was certain Vice President was one of those who were sincerely trying to work out our problems with Soviet Union and I tried to give him some examples from my own experience illustrative of Vice President's character, but by this time an alcoholic haze had settled over entire company as result toasts and I did not get very far. What follows must be interpreted in light of this atmosphere. Khrushchev repeatedly and solemnly asserted his desire for peace which he said was absolutely essential if we did not all wish commit suicide because of awful nature of modern weapons. He said they had 30 bombs earmarked for France which was more than enough to destroy that country and I believe he mentioned figure of 50 for either Britain or Germany. When my wife inquired how many he had for us he said this was a secret. When I proposed a toast to success of meeting May 16 Khrushchev said it was essential to reach agreement.

For otherwise if we let Adenauer lead us down wrong path he would conclude separate peace treaty with East Germany. This would end our rights in Berlin. If we then wished to attack Soviet Union we would all be destroyed. I asked if this meant they would attempt to throw us out Berlin. He said no, but it was the East Germans who would deny our access and as they were allies they would be supported by Soviet Union. He made some reference to

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our access being blocked both land and by air and added they would only be doing what we had done in Japan. I of course disputed this. Later on he mentioned that on his trip to France he would try to make this situation clear. When subject came up for about third time French Ambassador asked if Soviet Union would block our access to Berlin, to which Khrushchev vehemently replied "no" and that they would never attack us. All of his bellicose remarks were interspersed with protestations of his desire for peace and an accommodation. Kozlov and I had vainly tried several times to break up party and finally succeeded shortly before 6 a.m.

If Khrushchev's remarks were taken literally we would be back where we were before Camp David. I do not think they were meant in this manner however nor do I think from way he spoke that he was probing to find our reaction. Rather I think his purpose was to impress upon us seriousness of situation as he sees it. At end of conversation I told him privately I felt it my duty as Ambassador to be sure that he had no misunderstanding and that if they attempted force us out of Berlin we would fulfill our responsibilities to people of West Berlin. He said West Berlin was of little importance to them, and why did we attach so much importance to it. I said this was because we had given our word to people of West Berlin and bound to fulfill that obligation. He said several times that press had suggested to him that we sit down and try to solve Berlin problem and he said Soviet Union was fully prepared to take account of fact this had to be done without affecting our prestige.

I tried without success to get him to say why Berlin was so important to him, but he only replied "because it was surrounded by East Germany." At an earlier point in conversation he said something to effect that Berlin question was one of geography which he intended make use of.

As fact of our long conversation will be known I believe that French Ambassador and I should fully inform our British and German colleagues and tell our other NATO colleagues merely that Khrushchev had repeatedly expressed his desire for peace but had maintained standard Soviet position on question of Germany.

I hope we can keep presence of Longo from becoming known.

THOMPSON

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(*) Omission. Correction to follow.